



What's New in Ophthalmology Today?

Macular Degeneration Patients Benefit from Cataract Surgery

Patients with moderate and advanced macular degeneration benefited from cataract surgery. This was reported by the American Academy of Ophthalmology. As the population grows older the incidence of macular degeneration and of cataracts will increase and both conditions can cause blindness. In their patients 1939 eyes with various stages of macular degeneration enjoyed a statistically significant improvement in vision following cataract surgery. This remained stable after a one year follow-up. **"The best gains were in patients with vision worse than 20/40 before surgery. There was no difference in improvement noted between patients with the "wet" (new blood vessels) or "dry" (central atrophy of the retinal pigment epithelium) macular degeneration."** Furthermore, high doses of vitamins C and E, and beta-carotene plus zinc did reduce the risk of progression to advanced macular degeneration by 25% in the five years of the study. **Cataract surgery helps patients with macular degeneration.**

Follow-up. Two years ago we reported on a study of patients with **Leber's Congenital Amaurosis** – a blinding condition that effects children. A single injection in 12 patients ranging in age from 8-44 of genes that produce light sensitive pigments in the retina was done at U. of Pennsylvania hospital. Half of the patients are no longer legally blind and can walk and play like normally sighted individuals though their vision is still limited. The other six also improved but not as dramatically. Children did better than adults. Good News!

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